

THE  
**RHODE-ISLAND BAPTIST,**



**ALLEN BROWN,**

Preacher of the Gospel.

DEDICATED TO THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel *to every creature*—he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned.—*Jesus Christ.*  
Prove all things—hold fast that which is good.—*The Apostle Paul.*

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VOL. I.

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PROVIDENCE:  
JOHN MILLER, PRINTER.  
1823.

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## INTRODUCTION.

In our Prospectus, we gave a general plan of this work; the substance of which we here repeat. Our main design, is, to endeavour to promote the interests of pure and undefiled religion, as taught in the Holy Bible. Subordinate to this, ~~we have two~~ other objects. In the first place, to advocate such a system of doctrines, as is consistent with the commission which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to his apostles, to preach the gospel to every creature—requiring on the part of men, repentance, and faith, and holiness: and in the second, to shew, if possible, the excellency of that spirit of religious toleration, which allows every one to think for himself in matters of religion. Should we be successful in these two purposes, though subordinate to the first, it will not, in our opinion, require much sagacity to predict, that they will prove to the main design powerful auxiliaries. We hold it, almost an axiom, that whatever tends to unshackle the mind, will be promotive of the religion of the Bible. We know that infidels have asserted the contrary, but are happy to believe they have not proved it; although it must be confessed, that they have sometimes made a show of argument, reasoning from the premises laid down by certain divines, and the errors of *infallible* popery. In fact, allowing these premises to be correct, and if it be not a contradiction, these errors to be the truth, they have made more than a show of argument—they have done much to pull down the whole fabrick of christianity. But there is a redeeming *salvo* in the reflection, that certain divines, as well as the abettors of popery, have been and are still mistaken. Enlightened reason has done much to clear our holy religion of numberless inconsistencies and superstitions, in which it has been

involved, and with which it has been surrounded. And we rejoice in God, that the work is still progressing: one error after another is detected and exposed, and truth must ultimately triumph. An apocryphal writer says, "truth beareth away the victory."

We do not expect, however, that this will take place without a struggle. The early reformers had almost, literally, to fight in defence of protestanism. Later ones, although not so much exposed, because pretty generally throughout christendom, the inquisition, the stake, the scaffold, are not now permitted by the civil power ~~to persecute~~ will be obliged to suffer much. They will be proscribed and neglected by those, with whom they once took sweet counsel, and classed with hereticks and infidels. It will be said to them, "stand by, we are holier than thou." Against them, in the absence of the torturing and bloody machinery of licensed superstition, misrepresentation and slander will be employed. There is a political struggle in Europe for the emancipation of men; that they may walk abroad in their native dignity and freedom, fearless of the *dicta* of sceptred majesty and despotism. This struggle, although it may be prolonged—although the Neapolitans have been quelled—although the iniquitous invasion of Spain, by the myrmidons of France, may for a moment repress the risings of the soul in that ill-fated country—although the Greeks may not be able in the present contest, to escape the horns of the crescent—and although the HOLY ALLIANCE may marshal her tens of thousands on the side of tyranny, this struggle will finally end in the emancipation of man. He will be free. The cause of liberty has gathered strength, and increased in magnitude and rapidity, like some majestic stream in its approach to the ocean, which at first, was no other than a few small rivulets, gushing from the side of a mountain. And the time is coming, that he who opposes this cause, will exhibit himself in the same ridiculous light, as though he were seriously attempting to arrest the course of a mountain torrent, with a few loose grains of sand. Similar to this struggle for



civil liberty, is that for religious freedom, now prevailing in many parts of the world, especially in these United States; and if we may prophesy on this subject, we should say, because we think we are warranted by the light of the sacred writings, that similar will be the result. Notwithstanding the tricks of priest-craft, complete religious toleration will gain the ascendancy, and the bigotry of sectarianism will be banished to whence it sprung—the den of the furies. We would remark here, as our opinion, that the accomplishment of this will be accelerated according to the manner of warfare on the part of those, who are the friends of liberal principles. They should have for their motto, “AMOR VINCIT OMNIA,”\* and proceed strictly on this principle. Such a motto, and such conduct would be well, even for those embarked in a bad cause—but they, certainly, should adopt them, who are engaged in a good one. Such, need not the aid of acrimony and invective. They can dispense with all weapons, but those of love, and unsophisticated argument.

We pray our readers to keep in view the two great causes of which we have been speaking. At this age of the world, we can, perhaps, calculate on nothing more certain, than that they will rise or decline together. They are the offspring of the same light.

We remarked—we hold it almost an axiom, that whatever tends to unshackle the mind, will be promotive of the religion of the Bible. Our reasons are these. 1. We have in some good degree examined the subject, and believe a mind free from prepossessions, will be led to embrace the system of revelation, as of divine authority, and as agreeing, strictly agreeing, with the principles of natural religion. 2. We are not required to receive religion, as a blind man might be colours, upon a mere declaration of him who should present them—but only upon rational evidence. Had Paul been a disciple of the Baconian philosophy, he could not have given a better rule on the subject, than he has in one of his Epistles. It is this:—“Prove all things—hold fast that

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\* Love conquers all.

which is good." 3. No one, who makes the slightest glance at popery, but must confess, that it owes its very existence, to the dreadful superstitions of the mind.—Some Catholicks, owing to these, would think it a greater sin, to read the Bible, than to burn a Protestant. There is something like this superstition in the minds of many Protestants. They have been educated to believe that certain systems of divinity are infallible. So confident are they, that they cannot listen for a moment to any argument against their darling creeds; and as for treatises written to shew their absurdity, they think them, without deigning to peruse their pages, worthy only a bonfire. Many, however, who have dared to think, in some degree for themselves, see the absurdities of what they have been taught, but yet fear to renounce them, as they have been likewise taught, that should they do so, they would certainly make a shipwreck of faith, and lose their souls. We can speak on this subject, not only from fact, but experience. We have ourselves been under the same kind of influence; and with trembling steps, and slow, did we advance to the conclusions, to which we imagined our reason and revelation led. And we would ask liberty to mention, what we would humbly and thankfully state, that we were assisted to do so, by having the same manifestations of God's love to our soul, as we had, while holding firmly to our former creed.—We mention this to encourage others, to break, if possible, the fetters of the mind, and embrace what they conceive to be the truth, at the hazard of the anathemas of any sectarians whatever. If they do this in the fear of God, and with a view to his glory, he will fill their minds with light, and their souls with love.

With respect to peculiar views of doctrinal subjects, it were not necessary to enter into a discussion of them, but for the stand that some of our Christian brethren take. They suppose their own to be infallible. Supposing this, they transgress the rules of charity in denouncing those who differ from them—scarcely allowing sometimes, that they sustain the Christian

character. In fact, so tenacious are they concerning certain points in their creed, in this region, some have been known to proscribe a minister differing from them, although they ordained him, with a full knowledge of the fact. This case will be brought more fully to light, should it be deemed, on more mature reflection, capable of aiding the cause in which we are engaged. We consider ourselves driven to the necessity of advocating our own views, when neither they, nor we, for entertaining them, find any quarter from many calling themselves Christians. We hope to be able, at least, to shew that our interpretation of scripture, is equally *reasonable*, if not so *mysterious* as theirs. We hope to make it appear, that all the essential doctrines of our holy religion are so plain, that he who runs may read them: Indeed, if this were not the case, how many unfortunate immortals would perish because of their ignorance, merely, for their ignorance. Not being able to understand and comprehend the mysticisms, and metaphysicks, and decrees, and dogmas of certain divinity, they must be doomed to everlasting burnings. If others believe this, we cannot. We cannot, because it is clear to our minds, that a thing like this, is at war with reason and revelation, and the goodness of that Being, who delights in the happiness, and not in the misery of his creatures.

Possibly, we, or some of our correspondents, may enter upon doctrinal subjects, at some future time, in a systematick manner, treating them in a regular order. At present, however, our business is rather to supply hints and fragments. If, in this humble way, we can clearly exhibit the truth, and pour its light upon some sightless eye-ball, we shall be satisfied—leaving volumes, and quartos, and folios, to them of rare ability, and who, among other objects, write for fame.



## DOCTRINAL.

Is it possible, said we, rousing from something like a reverie, is it possible, that there are any who believe that that Being, who is said to be "love," is cruel and unjust—or a doctrine fairly involving this!! Is there then no hope for the heathen? And must infants perish, and that too under a decree of Jehovah? Must the idolater, who knows nothing of the one only living and true God, and who is ignorant of any command against idol-worship, be condemned for worshipping, what he imagines, in the honesty of his heart, and according to the light of his dispensation, to be the Great Spirit? Must one be doomed to eternal burnings, for not believing in a Saviour, of whom he has never heard? Must the smiling babe, knowing not its right hand from its left, be damned for breaking a law, which it has never broken, nay which it has never known? Alas! for poor humanity. It is not only possible, but a sober fact, that some do believe this, or, such a doctrine. Some do believe in the tenet of *personal unconditional election to eternal life*. And, which adds not a little to the astonishment of the reflecting mind, such, or many such, suppose, that they who do not, are little better than outright infidels, and deserving of hell. We thank our Heavenly Father, that such will not judge us, in the last great day.

It is a little curious to see, how they who hold the tenet we have mentioned, are divided among themselves. Some of them believe, that he, who, the scriptures declare does not tempt any man, leads men into all sorts of vice and crime, and as actually hardens their hearts, as a smith hardens his iron, or his steel—and that he made them for this very purpose. Others deny this reprobation scheme, and pay off their Hopkinsonian brethren not only soundly, but roundly. They insist only that the Lord chose from all eternity, a particular number to the joys of heaven, leaving the rest to pursue at leisure, their own destruction. Many of both these, believe, that in electing souls to sovereign fa-



your, he passed by many amiable and lovely individuals, and in their stead, selected from among the wicked, the greatest monsters in crime and depravity;—and this merely to shew that he is a Sovereign—(as though there were no other method for the blessed God to display his sovereignty)—Many of both these, also believe, as we have intimated above, that the whole heathen world, will be indiscriminately doomed to the everlasting wrath of God; and that such infants as were not included in the covenant of grace, will share the same disastrous fate. Others of them imagine, that though the heathen world will perish, infants will be saved. Others are silent, as to both. They leave them, they say, where they find them, in the hands of God. Others, though professing the doctrine of election, will tell you, they know not what to do with it, and think it best to talk and preach but little about it. Yet though the subject is so blind to themselves, they will hold no intimate intercourse with any, whatever be their reputation for piety, who do not embrace it as a part of their creed.

We envy none their pleasures, who derive them from such views of the Deity, as we have mentioned. If they have enjoyment, they must, as it appears to us, possess something like the skill of a bee, which is said to extract honey, even from a poisonous flower; or, like that of a celebrated modern chymist, who, by the help of the burning “deflagrator,” turns carbon into diamonds.

For ourselves, we believe, that God, though a sovereign, is one of goodness and truth—swaying the sceptre of the universe in the most perfect rectitude—requiring of his creatures, only according to their ability, whether natural or moral. We believe there is a hope for the heathen. But, on no better authority, we confess, than that of Peter and other of the sacred writers. To quote one, may be sufficient: Peter declared to Cornelius and a little band with him, expressly assembled to hear the word of God, that “God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh

righteousness, is accepted with him." We also believe in the eternal salvation of all infants. But here again, we are obliged to say, that we have no better authority than Christ our Lord. He, the precious Redeemer has said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

### EXPERIMENTAL.

In the course of these eight days I have often had sweet views of Jesus, and at times felt him so nigh, so very clear to the eye of faith, that faith seemed lost in sight and enjoyment. I have been constrained to speak of him to others as the chiefest of ten thousand. What ineffable sweetness do I taste, when the name of Jesus is mentioned: an instantaneous heaven springs up in my soul. But, O! how is it, when so highly favoured, that I do not grow more like my Divine Master. Surely I do not improve the glorious visits as I ought, else I should gain more conformity to him. My soul longs for more of the Divine image. I feel ashamed before God and man, that I am not more holy, considering the advantages I enjoy. O Lord, remove the cause, that the effect may cease; and make me, as the King's daughter, all glorious within. Every day, I look to make progress in the Divine life; but, alas, how are my expectations disappointed: for in all I do, or say, I come short; yet the Lord bears with me. But shall it be always thus? I enjoy God in secret prayer, especially in the morning; and I enjoy him in social prayer, in conversation, meditation, and reading: but how can all this be, when I am so unlike him? O, to be holy as God is holy; to be meek and lowly as Jesus, to sink into all the depths of humble love, and rise to all the heights of Christian confidence. I may say with the poet:—

"My earth thou water'st from on high,

But make it all a pool;

Spring up, O well, I ever cry,

Spring up within my soul.

"With me I know, I feel thou art,

But this cannot suffice

Unless thou plantest in my heart,

A constant paradise."

This is truly the language of my heart.—*Lady Maxwell.*

# Eulogy

OF THE

**HON. TRISTAM BURGES;**

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH OF THE

**HON. JAMES BURRILL.**

The following elegant and pathetick production, was written and delivered at the request of the gentlemen of the bar of this town, in consequence of the demise of the late and lamented Hon. James Burrill, who at the time of his decease was a Senator of the United States. Not many, perhaps, are aware, that Mr. Burges was requested to furnish a copy for the press, at the time he pronounced it. For reasons not necessary to mention, he then declined. Through the persevering application of the Editor of this work, backed by the wishes of many of his friends, the Hon. Gentleman, has, at last, consented to have it published. The publick will, unquestionably, join us in thanking him for the grateful treat. It will be received, not only because it talks of a man, whose memory our country delights to honour, but because it is a choice specimen of eloquent writing. Should we have nothing of a literary nature, beside this address, it will be thought that this department of our work, for the ensuing year, has been well sustained.

The living ever cherish a memory of the dead. Their features are placed on the canvas, their form and stature given to the marble. In some countries art has laboured the entire preservation of the body; in others, changed by that element which has been deified for its purity, their ashes, inurned, are preserved by family affection or national gratitude.

Sepulchral monuments are scattered over the world and differ only in form and masonry. Their object is the same; whether the Cairn of the Gael, the Scythian tumulus, the Asiatick mausoleum, the Pyramid of Egypt, or the green hill top and unlettered stone of our own country's primitive children. They seem to form a kind of gloomy frontier between the two worlds, the great world of the living and the greater world of the dead; and we may sometimes read upon them something concerning those who have past from this region of shadows to that realm of realities.



Where letters were unknown, the achievements of departed worthies have been committed to historick tradition and parol song, and delivered from generation to generation, until by the revolution of kingdoms, the nation was extinguished. In all ages, literature, wherever it has flourished, has been employed in the production of memorials of the good and the great. History and poetry, biography and eulogium, people memory with the illustrious millions of past ages. Well was it said of the Greek and the Roman, "half our learning is their epitaph." The people of those nations toiled above all to perpetuate the excellencies of each other—not so much by brass and marble as by the more imperishable labours of literature. Their heroes, statesmen, orators, and artists, were distinguished by funeral eulogiums.

France seems to have adopted this custom of classical antiquity; while, in England, a tomb in Westminster-Abbey is the great panegyrick of British glory. Marlborough is eulogized by dull, cold marble. Turenne's immortal exploits are celebrated by Fletcher, in the no less immortal eloquence of his country.

Our own country has produced some examples in this department of literature; and we, my brothers, have before this day mingled our tears with our eulogies over the tomb of our departed friends. I say not these things to apologize for our manner of commemorating the merits of our departed friend. Those who knew him, and who know us, can never believe us ostentatious in sorrow, or in eulogy. Although in other communities, the excellencies of their illustrious dead may not be commemorated in the manner we are this day attempting; yet let us choose rather to imitate the example of republican antiquity, in such an instance of bereavement, as that before us; where, not only we, his professional brothers, deplore our loss; but this religious community, over which he for years presided; the learned fellowship and corporation of the University, where he held a distinguished seat; the Federal Adelpi, of which he was a first founder, and



most classical brother; the association for encouraging the economy, and preserving the items of the surplus produce of the humblest individual labour, which has, already, given publick testimony of his high merits; the great commonwealth society for the advancement of Domestick Industry, which has lost in him one of its earliest and most devoted patrons; all the commercial institutions of this community; the inhabitants of this his native town; every virtuous and high-minded son and daughter of Rhode-Island; in a word, our common and universal country, mingle their deep and heartfelt regrets with those tears, shed over his tomb, by the illustrious citizens of that high and august body, in the very bosom of which, as in the bed of glory, our townsman, our friend, our brother, our lamented Burrill expired.

Before this hour the story of his death hath been told in the utmost limits of our inhabited country; and I do believe, humble as are my abilities, could my voice reach so far, the narrative of his merits would mingle with the melancholy echoes of that tale, and be heard by every ear with mournful pleasure. I may be charitably mistaken. Some one may have selected an illustrious foe whom he could not reach, when alive, but may dare to plunder, when dead. It cannot be. The savage leaves his fallen adversary, unviolated, when he cannot adorn himself with his spoils.

Such then is the occasion, and such the object of this day's assembly. Pardon me, my brothers, my fellow-citizens, for being in this place, and for this purpose. I deeply feel the embarrassment of my situation. The character of a great Scholar, Advocate, Statesman and Legislator, can be perfectly drawn by him only who is deeply imbued with all those illustrious excellencies. Cæsar only could write Cæsar's Commentaries. None but the great master of the Forum could portray the perfect orator of Cicero. A few sketches only of the character of our lamented friend will be attempted. Even here the touches may be unfaithful, while the hand trembles with sympathy, and the col-

ouring of the piece is dimmed by the tear of the artist. How can I speak of such a son, when I know my voice will be heard by his venerable and bereaved father? How can I speak of such a father, while I behold his weeping children? The light of eulogy will only shew them more distinctly their bereavement. It cannot brighten the gloom of their desolation. "Thoughts that breathe and words that burn" can never relume the eye and warm into life the lineaments of his face, who so much and so affectionately loved them. The sage of Athens said, count no man happy till after death, because that alone places his fame and fortune beyond the mutations of life. The great Teacher of Nazareth disclosed a more sublime and consoling philosophy, and irradiated the darkness of ancient wisdom with the light of life, and immortality beyond the grave; and all the felicities, and glories of a new heaven and a new earth.

His disconsolate family will look through their tears to that region of renovated affection and inextinguishable enjoyment. We, his friends, must endeavour to mention some of his excellencies, that we may the better remember and honour and emulate them.

Important subjects have grandeur enough in their great departments to excite a high interest, and leave no necessity for minute remark or protracted detail. Yet all who hear me will expect so much of detail, as will exclude confusion.

The Hon. *James Burrill*, jun. was, as you all know, a native of the town of Providence. His father, a respectable citizen and artist of this place, is yet alive among us, at the age of 76 years. His mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Burrill, a lady of fair and cultivated mind, departed this life on the 1st day of March, A. D. 1811, aged 64 years, esteemed and much lamented by her acquaintance and friends. Their son, whom we this day lament, was born on the 25th day of April, A. D. 1772. His health was never firm, and he was through life more remarkable for the vigour of his mind, than the strength of his body. The rudiments of his Eng-

lish education were acquired in the common schools of that time. His instruction, preparatory to college, he received from the Hon. William Wilkinson, then an eminent teacher of language and mathematicks in Providence. He was entered in the Freshman class of the then Providence College, now Brown University, Sept. A. D. 1784, at the age of 12 years. Dr. James Manning, one of the first scholars, teachers and orators of the age, then presided over that institution. He was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts, at the commencement in September, A. D. 1788, and immediately commenced the study of law, at the age of sixteen, in the office of the Hon. Theodore Foster, then an extensive practitioner at the bar in all the courts of this State. The State of Rhode-Island adopted the constitution, May 29, 1790, and Mr. Foster was appointed a Senator in Congress from this State, and resigned the practice of law. On this event, Mr. Burrill entered the office of the Hon. David Howell, then in full practice, and whose knowledge of law and the liberal sciences, has not been exceeded by any scholar of his time. Under such teachers and by such instruction he laid the foundation of that character, which is now looked at and admired, by our united country. He was admitted an attorney and counsellor at law, in all the courts of the State, at the September term of the Supreme Judicial Court, A. D. 1791, at the age of 19 years, and commenced and continued the practice of law with great success and unremitting industry, unless when interrupted by enfeebled and declining health. In October, 1797, he was appointed attorney-general in place of the Hon. R. Greene, who having been elected U. S. Senator at that session, resigned that office. At the age of 25 years, he received this trust and held it, through all the political phases of the State, till May, A. D. 1813, almost 16 years, when his health being greatly impaired by the toil of professional labour, he resigned that office and the practice of the law together. In June following he was returned a member of the General Assembly for the town of Providence. In May, 1814, he was chos-



en speaker of the house of representatives. He was elected chief justice of the supreme judicial court of this State at the May session, A. D. 1816. He held this office till the following February, when he was elected to the Senate of the United States. He attended four sessions of Congress. On the 25th day of December, A. D. 1820, in the 49th year of his life, after a few days illness of a pulmonary complaint, he expired in the full possession of his understanding, nothing doubting the goodness of God, and the blessedness of immortality.

This brief and imperfect narrative has conducted us from the humble cradle of infancy, to that illustrious eminence, where he expired. This elevated point affords us ample view into the other world. Here let us pause. It may be good for us to be here. We may the better commune with ourselves and with the melancholy dispensation of Divine Providence, which has called us hither. We will look back again to some distinguishable points in that bright course over which we have run the eye so rapidly.

He begun to live when men begun to speak of American independence. Maternal caresses were mingled in his young ear with the story of national oppression; and the songs of his cradle were the songs of liberty and the triumphs of his country. His maxims of freedom were coeval with his life and he never read or heard of any form of slavery or oppression without abhorrence. His country was the land of liberty, and his love of it, his patriotism, became a kind of sentiment. All his political feelings and opinions, were exclusively American; nor was it possible, without unravelling the very texture of his soul, to render him so truly, and so entirely a citizen of any other State, as he was of Rhode-Island. His education was not foreign; it was all of his native State. He was a disciple of the school of Manning; who so taught and illustrated the principles of his divine art of speaking, that his hearers were ready to exclaim in the language of the great Euripides, "O Eloquence! thou art indeed the Em-



press of the world." Here did Burrill form his style and manner, warmed and purified, by fire from the divine altar of Manning. Even at that early period, his extemporaneous declamations on history gave shining promise of what a riper age might produce. History was ever to him a study of delight; and perhaps he has not left a man alive, whose mind contains such a treasure of historick truth. This fact is not mentioned in derogation of any other characteristick of his mind; he was indeed a scholar in every department of literature; and although, of all men, the most distant from every thing pedantick; yet his language, his conversation, his publick discourses were often enriched with Belles Lettres allusion, and ever truly classical.

The advocate is formed from an assemblage of qualities which, whatever they may be, and they are all illustrious, no man can succeed in that department unless he is master of them. He must be deeply learned, not only in jurisprudence, but also in all those arts and sciences, which go into the character of an accomplished scholar. There is a connexion, an association, a kind of brotherhood among the sciences; nor will one of them allow you intimacy with its arcana, unless you cultivate acquaintance with the whole illustrious family. The advocate also, above all men, must be endowed with quickness of perception; a kind of intuition by which he immediately perceives the whole nature and all the relations of the question in controversy. A ready command of thoughts, likewise, must never desert him. His ideas are ever mustered and martialled; and like an army in an enemy's country perpetually under arms. His magazine of knowledge, his troops of thought, will be useless unless he is supplied with an exhaustless fund of language. From this resource he draws the dress, the armour, the very weapons of all his ideas. Added to all these he must be of unwearying industry; unfainting perseverance; never triumphing in success; never cowering at defeat; but patient under contradiction, and calm yet prompt in re-

ply ; over all, incorruptible in morals, pure minded, liberal and single hearted in religion. He was truly an advocate.

His profession was that of an advocate. His professional course was indeed prosperous ; and therefore highly honourable to himself, for it was the boon of no purchased patronage. Like the great Roman advocate, he achieved his own success by his own merit ; and was truly the great master builder of that massy and almost irresistible influence which he held in the tribunals of this State. He stood there on an eminence of his own raising, alone, and peerless, in the great labours of advocacy.

Early in his splendid career, he was elected to the office of attorney-general—the advocate and the accuser for the State—the great keeper of the code of criminal justice, and in some States almost its only expositor. That code which marks the munipale innocence or criminality of every citizen, and shows the measure of punishment to be awarded to each kind and every shade of publick delinquency. While we slumber quietly under the faithful administration of the laws, we never dream at how many points the publick peace may be violated. From trifling broil and battery up to armed outrage and red-handed murder ; from the stealthy step of midnight burglary to petty cheat and incipient fraud, a host of crimes watch round the Commonwealth, ready to seize their prey whenever they may maraud with probable impunity. To guard against the movements of this array of felony—to break its ranks—arrest, convict and bring to justice the publick offender ; yet so as not to suffer any portion of publick resentment to be mingled with the trial or the punishment, requires a diligence that never winks, a perseverance that never tires, aided by all the learning of advocacy, and all the impartiality of justice. I need not say how many of these high excellencies went into Mr. Burrill's character in that office. The State have said it already. It is on record, and he carried with him at his resignation the thanks and the regrets of all the wise and the good in the Commonwealth.

He was elected chief justice.

The first judicial magistrate is charged with an office of more responsibility than any other in the State. The court where he presides holds a control over all inferior tribunals; and he is, in a high degree, accountable for the correctness of their decisions. In most countries, civilized, the laws are contained, not only in statutes, but in registered decisions and precedents. These are the great legal buoys and beacons to direct the course of the judge. In Rhode-Island it has not been so. We have not like the people of all other States, a body of reported cases. It has not been deemed expedient by the people of this State to commit the adjudications of their courts to the control of the type; nor have they ever acquired the entire authority of precedent. They have no existence, but among the mass of the non scripta of nations; and we learn them, as the ancients learned the labours of Hercules, and the wanderings of Ithacus, from the uncertain vane of tradition. Judicial decisions, in Rhode-Island, are precisely in the condition of all human transactions, before the invention of letters, either alphabetical or hieroglyphick. The wisdom of one generation of judges cannot possibly benefit another; for there is no legal mode of certifying oral adjudication, and giving that the force of a record, which has never been committed to paper. The judge must feel his way by foreign light, however fallacious, or obscure; and the reported decisions of our sister States are held up before him, with all their conflicting authority and evanescent analogies. The sword and the balance are committed to his hand, and he is directed in the language of the immortal Curran to administer to us that portion of justice, which falls to our allotment on this side the grave.

When Mr. Burrill was elected to this high trust with all its weight of responsibilities and complicated embarrassments, the difficulties vanished before him. He was indeed so much master of all a great judge should do, that he seemed to have filled no other office through



life. He sat on this seat, alas, a few months only, but it was a luminous point in our history. Had he continued there for years, his administration would have formed a judicial era, and been called the time of Burrill.

His last publick office was that of Senator in Congress. This appointment gave him no new abilities.—It placed him on a theatre where men might discover those which he had a long time possessed. A man, who goes from Rhode-Island to the high Parliament of the nation, whatever may be his character, his rank, or his talents in his own State, must encounter, and overcome a host of prejudices before he can reach that high estimation to which our lamented friend arrived. Men of great communities respect each other more than they do men of small ones. They measure the powers and respectability of a man by the opinion they have of his country. A Theban was hardly considered as a Greek, until the time of Epaminondas. Rhode-Island was formed on a political basis which necessarily placed her at war with the most unrelenting prejudices of her New-England sisters. Her religious freedom put her out of the protection of all the bigots of the world. Although her policy has since been followed, in some degree, by most Christian States ; yet then, this little State was the only spot of earth in the great christian world, where a man might commune with the Father of Spirits and the Redeemer of the world without the intrusion of any one, to tell him how many gods he must worship, or in what manner he must adore his Creator. Those who fled to Rhode-Island from the scourge of persecution, were anathematized, as atheists, without sabbath or sanctuary, by those who purified the church with cord and confiscation, and remained in full communion, according to the statute in such case made and provided. It was this delusion and others which excluded Rhode-Island from the New-England league of defence against the savages. The same causes rendered it needful for Washington, in our Revolutionary war, to impress on Congress the importance



of Rhode-Island. Till lately, Rhode-Island has been regarded, geographically, even by liberal men; and ecclesiastically, by those who are bigotted. Notwithstanding the men she had, at times, sent to the national councils, and to the publick service; although they, and the world had heard the fame of her Greene, the Washington of the north; and of her Perry, the Nelson of America; yet when her Burrill arrived at the Capitol in all his simplicity of manner and style of appearance, like Philopœman, alas, the last of the Greeks, there must have been, not a few, who were ready, in the spirit and language of Hebrew sarcasm, to exclaim: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But he avenged—O how nobly, how amply, he avenged his native state! In the short term of three years he has arrived to the first rank of esteem and honour in the Senate of his country. He reached that point, not by the pliant arts of a courtier; nor by the bartering, shuffling chicanery of intriguing politicians. No; it was by his candour, his patriotism, his wisdom in council, his powers in debate; the diligence and fidelity, wherewithal he kept the high trust reposed in him by his country. The high-minded men with whom he controverted great questions of national interest, beheld with delight the noble bearings of their adversary, and cheered him with their confidence, and cherished him with their esteem and friendship. What else could have placed him on the eminence where he stood? He won his way thither, hand to hand, in controversy with men of the strong arm, a stranger feeling, and on questions too, stirring more blood than has been moved by any debate in the years of peace.

Among these questions the Seminole war and the restrictions on slavery in our country, stand most conspicuous.

Our relations to the Indian tribes have ever divided the white population of our country into two great classes. The characteristic of each class is the peculiar policy which each would adopt in their conduct towards those tribes. They may be denominated the

Hebrew and the Roman policy. Great and good men, are and have been, in each class; nor need we now consider, which is most wise, or most moral. It may be well however to remember that many of these partisans have defended their hypothesis with all the heat and intolerance of religious sectaries. The followers of the Hebrew school ever regarded all the red nations of this country, as mere Amalekites, and to be utterly destroyed by the edge of the sword. The disciples of the Roman schools looked on them as the founders of that great nation did, on their Italian neighbours, people to be conquered if possible, by courtesy, and civilized into citizens of the commonwealth. Most of the first settlers of New-England were of the Hebrew persuasion. Roger Williams was the first, or among the first, who broached the Roman policy; and he was perhaps the only man of his time, in whom the red men of those days had entire confidence. When he said *Peace*, they never suspected an ambush. Among the great men of our age, Washington and Jefferson have been illustrious followers of the Roman policy.

When the great question of the conduct of the Seminole war called up the attention of Congress, it speedily arrayed men, throughout the nation, under those two great classes. In this field of debate, our departed friend held a most distinguished post; and was also one of a tribunal formed from the Senate with high and enviable powers. The military was called to account by the civil authority; Coriolanus must submit his martial merits to the voice of his country. Through this contest, so long and so ardent, our Senator carried himself with such dignified impartiality, so fixed to one side, so moderate to the rest, that his warmest political opponents in Congress did homage to his conduct and great abilities.

The great question of the restriction of slavery was the last and the brightest of his fields; and here indeed, "He won golden opinions from all sorts of men." All questions concerning slavery deeply interest the United States. Wise men view it as an evil; good men con-

sider the voluntary extension of it, as a national transgression. Slavery has no place, among the great principles of our revolution, and national independence; and the very instrument, by which we assert our claim to equal rank among the nations of the earth, explodes every idea of slavery from our political canons. It is an evil, which must, indeed, be endured, until in the course of human events, it can be remedied. What these events may be, lies beyond the reach of human research. When they arrive, it will be, I hope, with safety to our country. We know that American slavery cannot have the remedy, which, in ancient times, was applied to Greek and Roman; and has, in modern days meliorated Turkish and Algerine slavery.— Among those nations emancipated slaves might be restored to equal rank in community; and reach the first honours of the nation. Our slavery is of a different dye. Oceans of freedom cannot wash out the degraded colour of it.

Americans are the only people who enslave against the dictates of conscience and the canons of their own religion. The Mahometan, whether Turk, Arab, or Algerine enslaves to proselyte; and so soon as he has persuaded his victim to believe in the prophet, throws down the whip, unlocks the chain, embraces his captive as a brother, and points him to the throne of the Sultan and the gates of Paradise. Dare the Christian, the American Christian, lord of a thousand African men in chains, do this? No! If the great Apostle of the Gentiles were again on earth, he would not suffer him to preach christianity to a congregation of his slaves.— The safety of the master is incompatible with the instruction of the slave.

I do believe the people of these states are christians; they have not formally renounced the religion common to the English tongue. Surely those men who practise the voluntary continuance and extension of American slavery; who condemn their victims to all the privations of this world, and exclude them from all the hopes of the next, needs must be christians; for no other re-



ligion contains in itself a fund of redeeming mercy, sufficient for the perilous desperateness of their condition.

The people of America have a tremendous account to settle with the people of Africa; and God in the course of his Providence seems to be forming a tribunal to bring this question to an awful arbitrament. The republick of Hayti is already not inconsiderable in power or resources. That nation has hitherto been held in check by a divided dominion. It is now united—it is one, and is directed by a chief equal to the command of such a power. He may not be disposed to extend his dominion; but he seems already not satisfied with those states who hold Africans in slavery.

From the mountains of St. Domingo his eye can trace the long shores and level plains of Cuba; and his impatient soldiery may hear the whip, the chain and the groan of bondage across the narrow frith separating the two islands. Can Spain protect this loyal colony from the grasp of this African giant, now grown to something like manhood? He was a Hercules at infancy, and crushed the power of France while in his cradle. Should the black cloud which now hangs on the Haytian mountains, fraught with the wrath of heaven, spread itself over the island of Cuba, it would settle on the Caribbean sea, and in one summer sweep from every green island in its bosom—every fragment of European power.

I do not say this republick of an hundred isles might not then be assailed by other powers, but the success might be, at least, doubtful. England did not conquer us. France did not conquer them; and those wars have again demonstrated how fatal their climate is to Europeans—how congenial to those children of the torrid zone. Spain seems to be withdrawing herself from colonial relations; and those colonies will be employed, at least for a number of years, in their own schemes of plunder, ambition and liberty.

How the advocates for the extension of slavery in these states may regard such a power, neighbouring so near us, may be worth their and our serious considera-



tion—those Americans who grow sugar along the northern waters of the bay of Mexico, and who will now soon push their plantations up to the very point of Florida, may rejoice to have our country cut off from “The cane-bearing isles of the west.” So will not think, and so will not feel, the oppressed men who drive their mills and work their fields. They will understand that some strong wind of the desert, or some mighty earthquake, has pushed the sun-bright region of their fathers to within a few leagues of their own land of bondage, and that on the other side of the narrow sound whose waters wash their feet, are their brothers rejoicing in wealth, in power, and in freedom. How many eyes will be cast across the glittering wave and see or seem to see the African flag floating over the walls of Havana. If those brothers, thus sundered, should meet, should grasp each other by the hand, (and what shall hinder their meeting?) then will indeed come that controversy to which Mr. Jefferson so awfully alludes, “A controversy in which God has no attribute which can take sides with us.”

This may not be until some distant, far distant point of time.

“Yet come it must, that great avenging Day.”

What nation has escaped it? The Romans were compelled to contend for empire with their slaves. It is the course of human events. Oppression forges her own chains. The descendants of Spartans plough for the ferocious Turk those fields which the Helots ploughed for their fathers. It was to avert from our country a more degraded destiny, that Burrill and his compatriots lifted the warning voice, and with so much zeal, talents and faithfulness, opposed the extension of this consuming evil. If he or they could but arrest it where it stood, and form an impassable barrier of the waters of the Mississippi—they beheld beyond the current of that river a white population extending itself to the shores of the Pacifick, and forming, perhaps, in half a century, a number of states and a nation of freemen,

sufficiently powerful to hold in check any mass of slaves which might receive emancipation by the free gift of their masters, or attempt to struggle for it, by the strength of their own arm.

But he lived to see this bright vision of his future country clouded. Slavery with all his chains was oared across the Mississippi. A new world beyond those waters is opened to American cupidity. Missouri organized herself, and in the paroxysm of triumph provided not for the emancipation, but the immortality of slavery. Do not say the malady is limited. Moral mischiefs are not controlled by imaginary lines; and the same power which baffled the friends of freedom, and is now running down the longitude with this burning pestilence, will acquire power enough in that direction, to evade their future efforts, and spread it to the utmost northern limits of our western territory.— Let not the friends of freedom, however, be disheartened, and give ground. Burrill lived and died in the glorious contest. There has not been a more illustrious one since the days of our revolution.

Although the marble still sleeps in the quarry which under the hand of the perhaps unborn artist shall give to future generations, the features, and the form of those men who have thus defended and illustrated the glory of their country; yet will that country take care of their fame; memory and emulation will cherish his and their excellencies; and the voice of tradition shall delight to repeat the story of their virtues, their talents, and their labours of patriotism, from one listening generation to another.

In the ages to come, when all feeling of these events shall have passed away; when every pulse that now beats shall be still, and every tongue that now speaks, shall be silent; then shall the radiant genius of history, walking amidst the monuments of our country, select those names and achievements which may adorn the moral hemisphere of the world; and our descendants, in after times, shall look with pride and delight on the names of Greene and Perry, and Burrill, glittering in the imperishable constellation of Rhode-Island glory.